

# Sarawak university achieves breakthrough in fertility research

By DIANA ROSE

**KUCHING:** Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) has scored another breakthrough in fertility research by creating a new method to achieve pregnancy.

It is called Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI), or in layman's term "single sperm injection," said Unimas Head of Obstet-

rics and Gynaecology Core Group Dr Chieng Hock Tiew.

Dr Chieng, 42, said in an interview yesterday that ICSI was the most advanced technology in the field of infertility treatment and one step ahead of the In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) method.

He said the process, conducted under a stringently-controlled environment, only requires one healthy

sperm to be injected into a female egg. The fertilised egg will then be transferred to the womb.

"This technology is highly skill-dependent. Such skill is vital to the success of the pregnancy," he said.

Thirteen patients have undergone the method and six of them achieved pregnancy.

With the introduction of ICSI, Unimas and its medical faculty have made national history because it is the first of its kind done by a Malaysian for Malaysians, Dr Chieng said.

Dr Chieng, who spent 20 years in the field of medical education in England, joined Unimas in 1996. Before returning to Sarawak, he spent four years training and

researching on fertility at the Hammersmith Hospital in London.

Dr Chieng said the main difference between ICSI and IVF was that the latter required four to five million sperm to ensure success while ICSI required only one healthy sperm.

He added that even if a man was unable to produce sperm, they had a method to get it from the testes.

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